JIM LEE

WILDCATS

COVERT-ACTION-TEAMS

2
OCT

J.LEE
D.WILLIAMS
SINC

Yeah, yeah, I know the book you're holding in your hands is about 4 or 5 weeks late. And I realize that this is endemic for much of the Image line. I'm sorry. I swore to my colleagues here at Homage Studios that I would not suffer the same fate, that my book would indeed be out on time. But you know what? There were five people who knew for a fact that *WildC.A.T.S #2* would surely miss shipping months ago and told me so. But try as they did to convince me otherwise, I simply refused to heed their prophetic words.

The five make up a sordid group—a veritable plethora of comic's finest—Carl "Grimrod" Potts. Dave "Big Belly" Olbrich. Karen "Vertigo" Berger. Scott "Ink-anetics" Williams. Todd "Wallflower" McFarlane. As freshly inaugurated parents, they all told me how *completely* my life would change with the impending birth of my first child. How much time, energy and love a newborn required. How little sleep, peace and quiet I could look forward to. How my deadlines would no longer be met.

And I, in a moment of hubris, refused to believe them. After all, hadn't I been drawing a monthly title for nearly 6 years? Juggled the enormous demands of plotting and pencilling a monthly book for many moons? Hadn't I always pushed myself to find the extra time, to put in the required all-nighters to get my work done and still manage to find time for friends and family? I knew Todd had taken a sabbatical after the birth of his first baby, Cyan, but I've always known ol' Toddmeister to be a weak-kneed weenie who couldn't handle the same workload as, ahem, yours truly.

Well, dammit, they were *right*. On July 17th, 1992, my life did change.

My wife Angie gave birth to a baby girl—Tyler Anne Joo-Ri Lee—a 9 pound 8 ounce screaming bundle of joy. It would be an understatement to say that becoming a parent has been the most wonderful, all-consumingly exhilarating experience I have ever felt. I didn't want to do anything more than stay home, change her diapers, hold her and watch her sleep.

At one point, I thought I could take care of her at home and draw while she slept. I mean, I had heard that newborns sleep quite a bit. And they do. But what I didn't realize is that between feedings and diaper changings, it requires literally hours of walking them back and forth in the hallways (often at ungodly hours) before they calm down and fall back asleep.

Anyway, to make a long story short, I had neither the time nor the energy to work on the comic but somehow it managed to get done and into your hands. Ignore the fact that all the artwork in this issue is pasted up, composite work taken from issue one. I hope, at some point, to finish the mini-series but right now, I've got to go and change some diapers.

Best,
Jim Lee
Homage Studios
San Diego, CA

P.S. I'm joking—*WildC.A.T.S #3*—the conclusion—will be definitely coming out in November! Maybe.
P.P.S I almost forgot to mention that the latest addition to the Image Army is none other than Mr. *Wolverine/Venom* himself—**SAM KIETH!** Yes, Sam will be drawing the adventures of his creation the *Maxx* to be published in *Darker Image,* an anthology book featuring *Bloodwulf* by Rob Liefeld and *Deathblow* by yours truly. I've seen Sam's first installment, and it looks *marvelous.*

JIM LEE
Co-Creator/Writer
Penciller

BRANDON CHOI
Co-Creator/Writer

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Letterer

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Background Ink Assists

RUTH GRICE
Editor

DIGITAL CHAMELEON
Color Separator

Revolution

McLEAN, VIRGINIA. AUGUST 9, 1992. 00:15 A.M. EST.

INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS.

THERE IT IS AGAIN, SIR...

PSI-OP // NORTH AMERICAN SURVEILLANCE UN

...STRONG ANOMALIES IN THE QUANTUM-PSIONIC FIELD NEAR WASHINGTON, D.C.

OR EVEN AN ENTIRE TEAM FOR THAT MATTER.

ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE NOT JUST REGISTERING ONE OF OUR *PSIONIC OPERATIVES*, TURNER?

NEGATIVE, MR. LYNCH. THESE POWER LEVELS ARE *WAY TOO HIGH* TO BE ONE OF OUR AGENTS.

MR. LYNCH! YOU'RE NEEDED IN C3! A RED FLAG'S GONE UP IN GEORGETOWN!

DAMN! GET ME A *SHUTTLE*, REYNOLDS! *NOW!*

ALREADY WAITING FOR YOU, SIR!

TURNER, KEEP ME POSTED!

00:22 A.M. EST. THE CRISIS CONTROL CENTER.

STATUS OF THE RED FLAG, COLBY?

BAD, SKIPPER, AND ONLY GETTING WORSE.

GOOD LORD!

COVER STORY ON THE GEORGETOWN EXPLOSION?

TOTAL PRESS BLACKOUT ON THIS ONE, COLBY.

RIGHT NOW, WE'RE BLAMING THE *LIBYANS*, BUT--

SO WHAT HAPPENED?

HEAVY COLLATERAL DAMAGE. AT LEAST A DOZEN CIVILIANS DEAD. TWO CITY BLOCKS VAPORIZED.

BEST GUESS? TWO ROGUE C.A.T.S DUKED IT OUT IN THE MIDDLE OF D.C.

ROGUE COVERT ACTION TEAMS? IN THE U.S.?

ANY WITNESSES OR SURVIVORS?

NO ONE SURVIVED THAT EXPLOSION, SKIPPER--

--BUT...

BUT WHAT?

C3! THIS IS SECTION CHIEF TURNER! GET ME DIRECTOR LYNCH ON THE LINE, NOW!

VNNN

SIR! A ZEBRA ALERT PSI-STORM IS CONING IN ON US. PSI-OP TYRELL MUST HAVE SNARED IT DURING HIS SCAN!

HE'S BURNING--

EH? WHAT'S THAT NOISE?

DAMMIT! GET TYRELL OFF-LINE BEFORE--

YEAARRGH!!

WARNING
INTRUDER ALERT
IN SECTOR C3

COLBY! ARE THE VIDEO MONITORS ON-LINE?!

AFFIRMATIVE, SKIPPER!

WARNING INTRUDER ALERT IN SECTOR C3

SECURITY! FIRE ON MY MARK!

NO. BELAY THAT ORDER. IT'S TOO LATE. THEY'RE GONE.

SHRAK!

SIR, THIS IS TURNER.

YOU'D BETTER COME DOWN HERE.

WHAT'VE YOU GOT FOR ME?

HIGH ABOVE GEORGETOWN...

00:25 A.M. EST.

IT'D BE BEST IF YOU JUST SAW FOR YOURSELF, SIR.

I'M ON MY WAY.

NICE MOVE, VOID.

'PORTED US OUT OF THE EXPLOSION AT THE LAST SECOND. EVERYONE ACCOUNTED FOR?

YIPPIE-KI-YAY! WE MADE IT!

LOOKS LIKE WE ALL MADE IT, BOSS.

BUT WHAT WAS THAT PIT STOP ALONG THE WAY?!

IF MEMORY SERVES, *WARBLADE*, IT WAS THE COMMAND CENTER FOR *I/O*...

I/O? NEVER HEARD OF 'EM.

THAT'S THE WAY THEY LIKE IT.

THEY'RE CUTTING-EDGE SPY-TECH--SPECIALIZE IN "BLIND-EYE" COVERT OPERATIONS, HERE AND ABROAD, LITTLE BUDDY.

THE NAME'S MARLOWE. JACOB MARLOWE.

SURE, LITTLE BUDDY...

BROTHER GRIFTER! YOU WILL ADDRESS LORD EMP WITH THE PROPER RESPECT.

WARBLADE! ANYTHING ON THE PERIMETER SCANNERS?

RADAR AND THERMAL SENSORS ALL READ NEGATIVE, SPARTAN.

WE STILL GOT THE FRIENDLY SKIES.

WELL, NOT FOR LONG.

THERE'S HEAVY ACTIVITY ON THE POLICE AND MILITARY BANDS.

THIS AREA'S GOING TO BE COVERED WITH THEM SOON...

...WHICH MEANS THE *PRESS* CAN'T BE FAR BEHIND.

LOOK, VOID, I'M NO MR. WIZARD, BUT HOW'D YA KNOW TA GET US OUTTA THERE?

THE MOMENT WAS A *TIME-LINE NEXUS* FROM WHAT I THOUGHT WAS A DREAM.

I REALIZE NOW THAT I HAVE IN FACT COME BACK IN TIME...

...FROM A TIME-LINE WHERE I MADE MY DECISION TOO LATE. ALL OF YOU... *DIED* IN THE EXPLOSION BECAUSE OF MY MISTAKE.

SO DOES THAT MEAN WE JUST CREATED A *NEW* TIME-LINE?

I KINDA LIKED THE OLD ONE--IF I COULD REMEMBER IT...

...BUT THAT *DON'T* EXPLAIN HOW WE ENDED UP AT THAT I/O PLACE.

THEY MUST *ALREADY* BE USING *PARANORMALS* IN THEIR OPERATIONS.

SPARTAN IS CORRECT, MARLOWE. THEIR PSIONIC ATTEMPTED TO PULL US INTO THEIR FIELD PATTERN DURING OUR ESCAPE FROM THAT *CODA*.

FORTUNATELY, I WAS ABLE TO DISRUPT THE *I/O* SCAN BEFORE WE BECAME TRAPPED THERE.

WHATEVER. WHAT CONCERNS ME IS HOW THE *CABAL* KNEW WE WERE GOING TO BE AT THAT CLUB TONIGHT.

I WOULDN'T SWEAT IT, BOSS. WE MADE SHORT WORK OF THEIR GOONS *AND* THAT CODA CHICK.

FROM HERE, IT LOOKS LIKE SHE PLANNED TO TAKE OUT A GOOD CHUNK OF GEORGETOWN ALONG WITH US!

OH MY GOD! THE CLUB... EVERYTHING... IT'S GONE!

SHE BLOWED UP *REAL* GOOD.

RELAX, VOODOO CHILE. YOU'RE SAFE WITH US, NOW. AS SOON AS WE GET BACK TO *HALO*...

THAT'S *IF* WE GET BACK, WARBLADE!

I'VE GOT A *SAFEHOUSE* NEAR QUANTICO, EMP.

BEST OFFER I'VE HAD ALL DAY.

GET THE COORDI-NATES, SPARTAN...

MIRV'S TAKEN SOME SHRAPNEL FROM THE EXPLOSION.

THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN MAKE IT ALL THE WAY BACK TO NEW YORK.

...AND LET'S HOPE NO ONE'S NOTICED OUR LITTLE JOY-RIDE TONIGHT.

I/O. 00:30 A.M. EST.

HIS NAME WAS JOHN TYRELL, SIR. WE LOST HIM DURING THE INTRUDER ALERT.

HOW DID IT HAPPEN?

ONE OF THOSE INTRUDERS WAS THE ROGUE PSI-OP WE DETECTED EARLIER TONIGHT.

TYRELL MUST HAVE CHANNELLED INTO THE ROGUE'S *DIMENSIONAL JUMP* WHEN HE WAS RUNNING A Q-P FIELD SCAN.

THE PROXIMITY OF THE ROGUE'S POWER *BLEW THE FUSE* ON OUR AGENT.

HE DIED INSTANTLY.

WE'VE GOT TO EVEN THE SCORE, SIR! SHOW THEM--

CALM DOWN, AGENT HENDERSON. WE STILL HAVE NO IDEA WHO WE'RE UP AGAINST.

TURNER, CAN YOU GIVE ME LOCATION? ARE THE *WILDC.A.T.S** STILL IN RANGE OF OUR SENSORS?

* ROGUE/FREELANCE COVERT ACTION TEAMS.

ALREADY ON IT, SIR.

THE ROGUE PSI-OP'S POWER SIGNATURE IN THE Q-P FIELD LEFT AN ECHO TRAIL.

WE'VE TRIANGULATED AN AREA NORTH OF FREDERICKSBURG, RIGHT ABOUT HERE.

GOOD WORK, TURNER.

ACTIVATE BLACK RAZOR ONE.

IT'S TIME TO PAY A SURPRISE VISIT OF OUR OWN.

QUANTICO. 01:00 A.M. EST. CONTINENTAL EXPORTS INDUSTRIAL PARK.

YA KNOW, SPARTAN, I CAN GET BIGGER IF YA NEED ME TO.

JEREMY, YOU'RE BIG ENOUGH ALREADY.

BY THE WAY, YA MISSED THE COMPRESSOR LINK-UP ON NUMBER THREE FEEDER.

THANKS, I NEED YOU TO WATCH OUT FOR THINGS LIKE THAT. IF YOU WERE ANY BIGGER, YOU MIGHT HAVE MISSED IT.

YOU WORRY TOO MUCH ABOUT MAUL, SPARTAN.

HELL, HE CAN PROBABLY GROW ANOTHER TWELVE FEET AND STILL REMEMBER HIS NAME. TRUST ME.

NOW, WHAT I'D LIKE TO KNOW IS WHAT THE BOSS AND THE REST OF 'EM ARE TALKING ABOUT IN THE OFFICE.

EMP TRUSTS YOU TO DO YOUR JOB, WARBLADE. YOU JUST HAVE TO TRUST HIM WITH HIS.

IT'S NOT THAT I DON'T *TRUST* THE MAN. I JUST DON'T LIKE BEING TREATED LIKE SOME GRUNT WHILE I'M FIGHTING *HIS* WAR.

SO THESE *DAEMONITE* ALIENS ARE BEHIND THE *CABAL*, *eh?*

YES, LORD EMP. THEY SEEK TO COMPLETE *PROJECT REUNIFICATION.*

SHOULD THAT HAPPEN, THE SURVIVAL OF ALL MANKIND WILL BE IN JEOPARDY.

AND NOBODY ELSE HAS DONE ANYTHING ABOUT THIS? COME ON! SOMEBODY IN THE GOVERNMENT *MUST* KNOW--

SOMEBODY DOES AND THAT *SOMEBODY* IS A HIGH-LEVEL *MOLE* FOR THE CABAL!

THESE PAST FOUR YEARS, THE MOLE'S BEEN DISGUISING REUNIFICATION AS A TOP SECRET RESEARCH PROJECT...

...AND IT'S GOING ACTIVE SOON, WE DON'T HAVE A WHOLE LOT OF TIME ON OUR SIDE.

SO WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?

THE CABAL IS CONSTRUCTING A DIMENSIONAL GATEWAY FROM DAEMON, THEIR HOMEWORLD, TO EARTH.

TO LOCATE REUNIFICATION, BROTHER GRIFTER AND I NEEDED TO FIRST FIND THIS MOLE.

WHICH IS WHY *YOU* FOUND US AT THE *CLUB* TONIGHT, TRACKING DOWN THE *GIFTED ONE* WITH THE *SIGHT*.

VOODOO.

SHE'S ONE OF A FEW WHO CAN SEE A DAEMONITE WHILE IT'S POSSESSING ITS HUMAN HOST.

MORE IMPORTANTLY, ACCORDING TO SISTER ZEALOT, SHE'S THE *ONLY* ONE WHO CAN *EXORCISE* IT.

WELL, FROM THE LOOKS OF THINGS, IT SEEMS WE'VE MADE ENOUGH OF A RUCKUS TONIGHT TO GET ON THE NEWS.

ODDS ARE, THE MOLE'S GOING TO HIDE HIMSELF.

OH MY GOD! IT'S HIM...! THE DAEMONITE MOLE!

WHAT?! SAM DONALDSON IS A DAEMONITE?

NO. NOT THAT ONE.

...AND THIS CULTURAL ELITE SIMPLY DISREGARDS FAMILY VALUES...

IT'S HIM.

HIM?! THAT CHUCKLEHEAD?

LORD EMP, IF THIS MAN *TRULY* IS THE MOLE, THEN WE MUST ACT NOW TO STOP HIM AND THE CABAL.

THIS IS GETTING *TOO* BIZARRE.

AND MORE COMPLICATED BY THE SECOND.

LORD EMP, BROTHER GRIFTER AND I ARE *SWORN* TO STOP THE CABAL AT ANY COST.

WE ARE AT YOUR SERVICE.

GOOD. I WAS HOPING YOU'D SAY THAT.

WHICH JUST LEAVES *YOU*, YOUNG LADY.

THE CABAL'S PULLED YOU INTO THIS WAR, VOODOO.

YOU'RE A THREAT TO THEM AND THEY WON'T REST TILL YOU'RE DEAD.

YOU CAN HIDE BUT THEY'LL FIND YOU JUST LIKE THEY DID TONIGHT.

JOIN US AND YOU HAVE A CHANCE.

I'D *LIKE* TO *BELIEVE* YOU.

I MEAN... YOU ALL DID SAVE MY LIFE TONIGHT.

IT'S JUST... I DON'T UNDERSTAND... WHAT ALL THIS IS ABOUT...

THEN IT'S TIME YOU FOUND OUT, HONEY.

EONS AGO, *KHERUBIM* EXPLORERS AND *DAEMONITE* MARAUDERS WERE STRANDED ON THIS PLANET.

CUT OFF FROM OUR HOME WORLDS, MANY OF THE KHERUBIM, LIKE LORD EMP AND MYSELF, ASSIMILATED INTO THE HUMAN POPULATION.

THE DAEMONITES, HOWEVER, MERELY SAW EARTH AS A PLENTIFUL SOURCE FOR HOST BODIES, A RICH COLONY FOR THEIR EMPIRE.

DURING THE ENSUING *BLOOD WARS* BETWEEN OUR TWO RACES, HUMANITY SUFFERED AS KHERUBIM AND DAEMONITE ESTABLISHED A BALANCE OF POWER.

THIRTY YEARS AGO, HOWEVER, WE SUFFERED A TERRIBLE DEFEAT THAT UPSET THE BALANCE. NOW, THE DAEMONITES ARE READY TO DELIVER THE KILLING BLOW TO BOTH KHERUBIM AND MANKIND.

AND SO, WE NOW SEEK THE *GIFTED ONES*-- THE HUMAN-KHERUBIM HYBRID DESCENDANTS, SUCH AS YOURSELF, WARBLADE AND MAUL.

WITHOUT YOUR HELP, THE DAEMONITES WILL SURELY TAKE THIS WORLD AS THEIR OWN.

I KNOW THIS IS A LOT TO TAKE ALL AT ONCE.

AND *BELIEVE* ME, I *KNOW* WHAT YOU'RE GOING THROUGH.

TWO YEARS AGO, I WAS NO ONE, WITH NOTHING TO MY NAME, GOING NOWHERE UNTIL VOID FOUND ME AND CHANGED MY LIFE FOREVER.

I'VE HAD ALL THIS TIME TO PREPARE FOR THIS BUT I'M STILL NOT SURE OF WHAT I'M DOING.

EVEN NOW.

BUT I *DO* KNOW THAT I *NEED* YOU.

TRUST ME AND I'LL *PROTECT* YOU.

I GIVE YOU MY WORD.

NORFOLK, VIRGINIA.

IT WAS RECKLESS OF YOU TO COME HERE, HELSPONT! I HAVE EVERYTHING UNDER CONTROL.

CALM YOURSELF, *M'KOI*. I'VE MERELY BROUGHT PIKE AND THE CODA TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL SECURITY--

ALL I *NEED* IS THAT *LAST ORB*, HELSPONT!

I HAVE ALREADY LOST ONE CODA TRYING TO KILL ZEALOT AND THE GRIFTER.

UNFORTUNATELY, *THEIR* BODIES WERE NEVER FOUND. I MUST ASSUME THEY ARE ALIVE AND CLOSE BY--

IT'S TOO LATE FOR ANY OF THEM NOW! BY THIS TIME TOMORROW, THIS WORLD SHALL BE OURS.

ASSUMING YOUR *THEORY* IS CORRECT, M'KOI.

I'VE *SEEN* THE POWER OF THE ORB, HELSPONT! I *WATCHED* THE *VOID-ENTITY* EMERGE FROM A DIMENSIONAL GATE BEFORE MY VERY EYES!

THOUGH THEY ARE AKIN, *PROVIDENCE* DOES NOT POSSESS THE POWER NEEDED TO ENERGIZE A GATEWAY BACK TO DAEMON.

McCOY

THIS LATEST ORB IS THE LARGEST OF ALL THE ONES I HAVE SEEN AND IT HAS YET TO ANTHROPOMORHIZE ITSELF!

ONCE WE BREACH ITS CONTAINMENT BOND, IT SHALL BE THE CATALYST TO OPEN THE DIMENSIONAL GATE.

THEN, ALL THAT REMAINS IS FOR *B'LIAL* TO DELIVER IT FROM *NASA'S* SECURITY VAULT.

B'LIAL?! THAT MEGALO-MANIAC'S OUR *HOLE?!*

IT'LL BE A *MIRACLE* IF THIS THING DOESN'T BLOW UP IN OUR *FACES!*

WATCH YOUR WORDS, PIKE.

KEEP IN MIND THAT HE OBTAINED NOT ONLY THE FEDERAL FUNDING REQUIRED TO BUILD THIS FACILITY...

...BUT ALSO THE *ORB*, ITSELF, FROM *NASA*.

YOU AND THE CODA HAVE A MUCH *EASIER* TASK. B'LIAL WILL ARRIVE SHORTLY. MAKE SURE *NO ONE* GETS IN OUR WAY.

RAZOR ONE TO CONTROL. SENSOR SPIKES PLANTED AND ACTIVE.

ROGER THAT, RAZOR ONE. READY TO RECEIVE DATA.

SOONER OR LATER, I'M GONNA CONNECT!

HAW! SHE'S JUST TOO FAST FOR YA, WARBLADE!

RAZOR TWO TO CONTROL. THERMAL AND MOTION DETECTORS REGISTERING TARGETS INSIDE THE BUILDING.

MY SENTIMENTS EXACTLY, WARBLADE.

NOW, YOU'RE IN TOO CLOSE TO USE YOUR *FLEXING* POWERS EFFECTIVELY.

ALLOWING ME TO DO *THIS!*

COLBY, THIS IS LYNCH. PREP RAZORS ONE AND TWO FOR A HOP AND POP.

ALL RIGHT, PRETTY LADY, IT'S TIME TA PLAY WITH *ME!*

HUNGH! THIS IS... NO... GAME... MAUL. NO... SECOND CHANCES... IN... WAR!

SHE'S GOOD, SIR.

ONE ON ONE, SHE COULD TAKE ANY ONE OF US.

YEAH, AND IF I HAD A FEW MORE BUCKS I'D BE FORT KNOX!

MAUL'S GOT HER IN THE BODYLOCK, SPARTAN.

THIS SPARRING SESSION'S AS GOOD AS *OVER.*

WHAT'S THAT?!

DAMMIT! HOW'D SHE--?!

SKIPPER, SHE'S ONTO US!

SOMEONE'S OUTSIDE THE BUILDING!

RELEASE ME! NOW!

HAW! YOU GOTTA BE JOKING!

I AIN'T FALLING FOR THAT ONE!

I DON'T JOKE, YOU OVERGROWN *LUMMOX!*

IT MAY ALREADY BE...

WHAM!

HOOOF!

WE'RE GOING IN!

...TOO LATE!

RAZOR ONE TO CONTROL!

VISUAL CONFIRMATION OF WILDC.A.T.S.

THEY'RE ALL YOURS, COLBY!

KICK @$$ AND TAKE NAMES!

CRAASH!

DIVER DOWN!

RAZOR TWO-WE'RE IN!

WHAT'S GOING ON?!

WHO ARE THESE GUYS?!

BLACK RAZOR! ASSAULT TEAM!

I/O'S NOT TAKING ANY CHANCES...

...THEY'RE SHOOTING FIRST AND ASKING QUESTIONS LATER!

THEY'RE HITTING US FROM ALL DIRECTIONS!

TRYING TO DISORIENT US!

AND IT'S WORKING...

CONTROL, ROGUE PSI-OP LOCATED...

...AND NEUTRALIZED!

AAARGH!

WHA--?! WHERE'S VOID?

ZEALOT!

THERE'S TOO MANY OF 'EM!

WE GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE! BEFORE THE REST OF--

TOO LATE, JAKE! THEY GOT HER ALREADY!

WE'RE ON OUR OWN!

YEEARRGH!

ENOUGH TALK, BROTHER GRIFTER!

WE FIGHT UNTIL VICTORY...

...OR DEATH!

WHACK!

LINNGH!

DAMN YOU, ZEALOT!

YOU'LL GET US KILLED OBEYING THOSE DAMN CODA PRECEPTS OF YOURS.

WELL, @#☆%! THAT!
JAKE!
GET EVERYONE OUT OF HERE!
I'LL COVER YOU!
DAMN!
THE RUNT CAN'T LEAD FOR $#@%!
I'LL HAVE TO RUN THIS SHOW MYSELF!
YOU'RE WASTING YOUR AMMO, COWBOY!
IF YOU'RE NOT CAREFUL, THE LITTLE LADY HERE JUST MIGHT GET HURT!
HE'S RIGHT.
ONE BAD RICOCHET AND IT'S OVER.
WHAT DO I DO NOW?!
LET GO OF ME!
RAAARGH!
AARRGH!
SHHRRIP!
WHA... WHAT HAVE I DONE?!
QUITE ENOUGH!
LISTEN UP!
WE'VE GOT THE GIRL.
SURRENDER NOW OR I WIPE OUT HER MIND! PERMANENTLY!
ACK!

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO DO *ANYTHING*--

--'CAUSE I'M ENDING THIS HERE AND NOW!

KBLAM!

ARRRHH! HOLY MOTHER'A *GOD!*

HURT HER AND YOU'LL BE WIPING UP *HIS* MIND OFF THE FLOOR WITH A *MOP!*

K-CHAK!

IF *WE'RE* GOING DOWN, WE'RE TAKING THE LOT OF YOU *WITH--uh?!*

THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY, MR. MARLOWE.

THIS LITTLE *EXERCISE* HAS GONE FAR ENOUGH.

WE'VE MADE OUR POINT.

THERE'S NO WAY OUT OF HERE.

IT'S *OVER.*

LYNCH!

YOU KNOW EACH OTHER?!

I KNOW MORE THAN YOU THINK, *LITTLE BUDDY!*

I THOUGHT YOU'D *NEVER HEARD* OF I/O?

THEN I HOPE YOU KNOW ENOUGH TO REALIZE THAT THIS COULD HAVE GONE DOWN MUCH *WORSE* FOR YOU THAN IT DID.

BECAUSE, YOU SEE, I NEED YOUR *HELP.*

I KNOW YOU'RE AFTER REUNIFICATION, MARLOWE.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE...

DON'T INSULT MY INTELLIGENCE.

I'VE BEEN TRACKING IT DOWN FOR *YEARS*...

...BUT I'VE ALWAYS GOTTEN TIED UP IN BUREAUCRATIC RED TAPE.

I *NEVER* IMAGINED THAT THE CABAL COULD HAVE HAD AN *INSIDER MOLE* SHUTTING ME DOWN.

TELL ME WHO IT IS, MARLOWE, AND MAYBE I CAN HELP YOU.

Hah! YOU'D LOCK ME UP ON THE SPOT IF I TOLD YOU, LYNCH. YOU'D NEVER BELIEVE ME, ANYWAY...

BESIDES, HOW DO I KNOW THAT *YOU'RE* NOT WORKING *WITH* THE MOLE?

SIMPLE. YOU'D BE *DEAD* AND WE WOULDN'T BE HAVING THIS CONVERSATION.

WE'RE *WASTING* TIME. WHAT COULD THEY BE TALKING ABOUT IN THERE?

LIKE *YOU* SAID, COACH. YOU JUST HAVE TO *TRUST* THE MAN...

SHUT UP, WARBLADE.

I *SHARE* YOUR FRUSTRATION, SPARTAN.

NOW IS THE TIME TO *FIGHT* AS WARRIORS, NOT *HAGGLE* LIKE POLITICIANS.

IF THIS MOLE'S AS HIGH UP AS YOU SAY, *I* CAN'T TOUCH HIM.

GIVE ME THE MOLE'S IDENTITY AND I'LL GIVE YOU THE LOCATION OF PROJECT REUNIFICATION.

I'VE HEARD ABOUT YOU AND YOUR OPERATION, LYNCH.

PEOPLE TEND TO DISAPPEAR WHEN YOU GUYS SHOW UP.

LET'S CUT THE CRAP, MARLOWE. I KNOW ALL *ABOUT* YOU. *WHO* YOU ARE AND *WHAT* YOU DO.

IF NECESSARY, I CAN TAKE IT *ALL* AWAY.

EVEN YOUR FRIENDS OUT THERE.

DOESN'T SOUND LIKE I HAVE MUCH OF A CHOICE...

I'M NOT *GIVING* YOU ONE.

Hmmph!

S.D.I. ASTRONOMICS.

AUGUST 9, 1992.

07:00 A.M. EST.

AGENT PETERSON, CHECKING IN.

NOTIFY BASE SECURITY THAT THE VP'S ARRIVED.

TEN FLOORS UNDER-GROUND...

THERE'S REALLY NO NEED FOR THE TWO OF YOU TO BE HERE. EVERYTHING'S BEEN TAKEN CARE OF.

HELSPONT JUST WANTED US TO *CONFIRM* THE ARRIVAL OF THE ORB *AND* TO KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THE GRIFTER AND ZEALOT.

YES.

WE'VE *ALREADY* LOST *ONE* OF THE SISTERS TO THEM.

WELL, NOW, IF YOU DON'T SUCCEED, YOU RUN THE RISK OF FAILURE.

AND WHILE I APPRECIATE HELSPONTS CONCERN, I'VE BROUGHT MY *OWN* CARE-TAKERS.

ONE OF THE *FRINGE BENEFITS* OF MY JOB.

YOU *GOT* TO BE *JOKING!*

THOSE *MEDIA HOUNDS* COULDN'T FIGHT THEIR WAY OUT OF A BAD *COMMERCIAL!*

THAT'S ENOUGH OUT OF YOU, PIKE!

YOU SEEM TO *FORGET* YOUR PLACE IN THE SCHEME OF THINGS!

I AM A DUKE OF HELLE!

NOT SOME *HALF-BREED* TRAITOR LIKE YOUR-SELF!

HHAPP!

I AM THE ONE WHO HAS MADE *REUNIFICATION* POSSIBLE!

AND *IF* YOU CARE TO WITNESS THAT GLORIOUS DAY...

...DON'T CROSS ME AGAIN!

:COUGH: :COUGH:

HOW MUCH LONGER WE GOTTA STAY DOWN HERE, SPARTAN?

JUST A LITTLE FURTHER, MAUL, AND WE'LL BE INSIDE THE INSTALLATION.

WHY'D WE GET STUCK WITH THIS JOB?

YOU'LL SEE SOON ENOUGH, MAUL.

SPARTAN, THIS IS MARLOWE. WE'RE ABOUT TO BEGIN CORE INFILTRATION. STATUS REPORT?

SO FAR, SO GOOD.

I'M TRACKING THREE POWER SIGNATURES IN THE COORDINATES I/O GAVE US. TWO OTHERS ARE HEADING TOWARD THE CORE.

WE SHOULD BE--

--HUH?

SECURITY BREACH!

IT MUST BE THE GRIFTER AND ZEALOT!

SPARTAN! WE MUSTA SET OFF--

NO! IT WASN'T US!

THEN THOSE I/O GUYS MUSTA DOUBLE-CROSSED US!

MAUL, I'VE GOT A FIX ON THE MOLE'S LOCATION.

HERE'S YOUR CHANCE!

MAKE IT BIG AND MAKE IT COUNT!

SKRAASH!

LOOKS LIKE WE HIT THE JACKPOT, SPARTAN!

YEEAGH!

SO WHERE'S YOUR FRINGE BENEFIT NOW, B'LIAL?

AMATEURS!

THWAK!

YOU MAY BE A GIFTED ONE, BUT YOU'RE JUST NOT IN THE SAME LEAGUE WITH THE GRIFTER OR ZEALOT!

OR ME, FOR THAT MATTER!

WELCOME TO THE MINORS, PIKE!

SHRAKOW!

HYYARGHH!

THE KID MAY NOT BE A *PROFESSIONAL* KILLER LIKE YOU, PIKE.

BUT I GUARANTEE THE TWO OF US ARE MORE THAN A MATCH FOR YOU!

ARROGANT FOOL!

SUCH MALE *MACHISMO* ALWAYS HAS BEEN THE *FATAL* FLAW OF YOUR KIND.

AND THOUGH I'D BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO THE *DEATH-DUEL* WITH THE GRIFTER...

UNNGHH!

KRAACK!

...IT SEEMS YOU WILL HAVE TO DO!

WHERE'S YOUR BRAVADO NOW?

WHAT'S THIS?!

R.R.RIPP!

YEARRGHH!

HOLY @#&%! SPARTAN!

GET AWAY FROM HIM, YOU CODA *WITCH!*

HADRIAN! YOU OKAY?!

NEVER MIND ABOUT ME --THE DAEMONITE'S GETTING AWAY!

SMACK!

OKAY, MR. POTATO-HEAD!

YOU'RE *FINISHED.* IT'S *OVER* FOR THE CABAL!

OVER?! IT HASN'T EVEN *BEGUN!*

LOOK *BEHIND* YOU, OAF!

HEY! DO I LOOK *THAT*--

"--STUPID?!"

WELL, DUDE-- NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...

LISTEN UP!

RELEASE THE VICE-PRESIDENT... NICE AND SLOW.

THAT'S RIGHT, BIG GUY...

...AND WE WON'T HURT YOU... MUCH.

THE CHOICE IS YOURS--THE *HOSPITAL* OR THE *MORGUE!*

SO TELL ME, *GIFTED ONE*...

JUST HOW *STUPID* ARE YOU?

uh, SPARTAN...I THINK...

...WE GOT TROUBLE...

TELL ME, MY DEAR CODA-- IS THE *TRIAD* IN POSITION YET?

YES, MASTER GNOME.

SLAG, ATTICA, AND *HARM* TRIGGERED THE ALARM AND ARE IN THEIR DESIGNATED LOCATIONS...

...JUST AS YOU ORDERED.

EXCELLENT! IT'S ALL PROCEEDING *EXACTLY* AS I PLANNED.

ALL THE PLAYERS HAVE GATHERED ON THE STAGE...

...FOR THE *FINAL ACT!*

WITH THOSE PATHETIC FOOLS FIGHTING AMONGST THEMSELVES, THE ORB WILL BE UNGUARDED!

FINALLY, MY LONG AND PATIENT VIGIL WILL BE REWARDED!

THEN, THE *POWER SUPREME* SHALL BE *MINE!*

NEXT: THE BIG BEAT DOWN

WETWORKS

HOMAGE STUDIOS present
WHILCE PORTACIO PLOT/PENCILER
BRANDON CHOI PLOT/SCRIPT
SCOTT WILLIAMS INKER
MICHAEL HEISLER LETTERER
JOE ROSAS COLORIST

THEY'RE ALWAYS THE SAME.

...COMMANDER DANE, MY I.F.F. REGISTERS THREE HOSTILES IN YOUR IMMEDIATE VICINITY.

I'M VECTORING THE TEAM TO YOUR COORDINATES RIGHT NOW, COMMANDER. E.T.A. TWO MINUTES...

NO! STAND 'EM DOWN, MOTHER. I'LL TAKE CARE OF THESE LITTLE @#%&S MYSELF.

CLICK! CLICK!

THEY'RE EMPTY. GOOD.

NOW THE *WET WORK* BEGINS.

THAT'S IT, BOYS, COME TO PAPA...

...I'VE GOT A LITTLE SURPRISE WAITING.

WHAROOM!

HE NEVER KNOWS WHAT HITS HIM.

I COULD KILL THIS ONE WITH HIS *OWN* BLADE, DON'T *REALLY* NEED THE GRENADE LAUNCHER...

...BUT IT'S *ALWAYS* WORTH SEEING THE EXPRESSION ON THEIR MISERABLE LITTLE FACES.

WHAROOM

IT'S ALWAYS THE SAME.

THEY BLAST AWAY WITHOUT ANY REGARD TO THE CONSEQUENCES OF THEIR FIREPOWER.

MOST OF THE TIME TAKING OUT CIVILIANS... THE INNOCENT, INSTEAD OF FIGHTING SOLDIERS ...WARRIORS, LIKE ME.

THEY'RE THE REASON I CREATED THE TEAM IN THE FIRST PLACE... TO BREAK THOSE WHO BREAK THE RULES OF WAR.

THE LAST ONE DOESN'T EVEN KNOW WHAT TO DO ANYMORE.

I WAIT FOR HIM TO TAKE HIS *BEST SHOT*...

...BUT I LOSE MY PATIENCE.

SO I TAKE *MINE*.

ALONG WITH MOST OF HIS FACE.

WALLS BURSTING OPEN BEHIND ME. TOO MUCH NOISE...

...MUST BE MY CREW.

A BIT MELODRAMATIC, BUT GOOD SOLDIERS WITH DECENT HEARTS.

THERE'S WAR BREWING. I CAN SMELL IT, LIKE FRESH WARM DEATH ON A BATTLEFIELD.

MY LITTLE FIGHTING FAMILY IS READY, I CAN FEEL THEIR EAGERNESS. I JUST HOPE I CAN KEEP THEM ALIVE THROUGH IT ALL...

YOU ALL RIGHT, BOSS?

B.Z.,* JESTER.

YOU REALLY MADE A MESS THIS TIME, THOUGH...

NO...

...NOT REALLY.

FIN

*BRAVO ZULU: EXCELLENT/JUST FINE.

ZONE